

In the discussion of this question—why do prominent men write for journals that publish worse than improper advertisements?—a distinguished surgeon raised the following interesting point: What good do these authors think will come to them from publishing their articles in such a medium? The subject of advertising, and particularly nostrum advertising in medical (?) journals, is a popular one at the present time and criticism is heard on all sides though this criticism may not reach the writers at first hand. The man who contributes to such publications is certainly criticised most unfavorably by a large number of the very people whose good opinion he would most like to keep. Take the same men who have already been mentioned in that connection in this issue; they have been criticised in no unmeasured terms by many of their associates whose good opinion they value; but doubtless such words of criticism would never have been said to them directly—except in this JOURNAL. The strait-laced man, the man who will not see his name on the pages of such a publication and who will not subscribe to any such, may be laughed at by some, but he gets the respect of all and his attitude is absolutely above cavil. What good can it do a man like Binnie, able surgeon and most scholarly thinker, to publish a good article in a journal that carries the sort of advertising one finds in the same issue of the *American Journal of Surgery* in which his paper appears?

We howl a lot about the outrageousness of the newspapers in printing advertisements of quacks,

THE PRESS AND PATENT MEDICINE.

cancer cures and patent medicines of all sorts, but are we very much better than they? Look at our medical journals and the fraudulent nostrums they advertise! Look through the advertising pages of the *New York Medical Journal*, the *Medical Record*, the *Annals of Surgery*, for example, and see what you think is the difference between our own publications and the daily press! There is mighty little, when you come to study it. And it is just because decent men are willing to contribute articles to or subscribe to these journals, that they live and insult an honest man's intelligence in their advertising pages. What good reason can we have for asking the newspapers to drop their fraudulent patent medicine advertisements when our own medical journals publish advertisements of just as great and just as palpable frauds that have been shown up over and over again? If the members of our profession did not keep these journals alive, either they or the nostrums or both would die. What is the ethical difference between an antikamnia "ad" in a medical journal and a peruna "ad" in a daily paper? Yet you object to the latter but tolerate the former! We talk a lot about the apathy or the ignorance of the public in opposing public health legislation, but it is not in it with the apathy or the ignorance of the medical profession in opposing

the honest work of the Council by supporting publications that keep on advertising exposed frauds and rank nostrums! Man is certainly the most inconsistent of all animals!

At various times, during the past ten years, there has been some discussion as to the quality of the scientific papers published in the

QUALITY OF PAPERS.

STATE JOURNAL. The comment of the editor has always been that the papers published in the JOURNAL reflect the productivity of the physicians in the state and their attitude toward their fellows in the state and toward the STATE JOURNAL. If all the best papers written by members of the Society are sent to other and larger or more widely circulated journals, then the average paper in the STATE JOURNAL will not be of very high class. That, it would seem, is obvious. Also, it would also seem to be equally obvious that such writers have no reason or excuse for any criticism of the quality of the papers that do appear in the JOURNAL. All this is apropos of two things that have recently been forcibly brought to our attention. Very few papers read before the county societies in the southern part of the state are sent to the JOURNAL; and some very good papers are occasionally read before those societies. Furthermore, please read the proceedings of the San Francisco County Society, in this issue, and note the distribution of the papers presented before that one society. The desire of every publication committee that has existed is to print the best possible papers and to represent the whole state; to have the JOURNAL truly representative of the whole Society and not a small portion of it. But no publication committee can do more than make use of the material that the members provide. It all comes back to the original contention—the STATE JOURNAL is just what the members of the Society make it. If they write and contribute good papers, then the scientific tone of the JOURNAL is good; if they do not do this, then it is lower than it should be. Let us always have criticism, for it is good for any one; but let us also be sure that we understand what we are criticising and why. It is up to the members of the Society.

Probably only a few even of those who are deeply interested in the American Medical Association, have any very clear idea

PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN.

of the enormous amount of work directly affecting the medical profession and the public, that the Association is doing. This particular word of comment relates to only one of the various large and important activities of the Association—its press bureau for the education of the public on public health matters. When the attempt was made to secure general public health legislation by the Congress, it was at once evident that the public at large was and is densely ignorant of all things pertaining to or related to medical science, public health, hygiene, sanitation, etc. Ignorance generally means opposition; when you see people opposing